

REGULAR MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
January 25, 2016

Mayor Paul M. Shapiro called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Raymond, Ryan, Sargent, Shaiken, Shapiro
Excused: Kegler

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Sargent seconded to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2016 meeting as presented. The motion passed with all in favor except Mr. Shaiken who abstained.

III. PROPOSED ORDINANCE REGARDING TOWN SQUARE

1. Public Hearing

The Town Clerk read the legal notice.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, urged the Council not to vote on the ordinance tonight and questioned why rights already given to the Council by the Charter are restated in the proposed ordinance. Ms. Wassmundt asked if the wording is hiding some other purpose.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, agreed with Ms. Wassmundt's statement and stated he was glad to see tobacco products banned in the Town Square.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, stated that while the proposal seems innocuous he also agrees with Ms. Wassmundt's concerns.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Charles Naumec, Riverview Road, offered clarifications to his January 11, 2016 comments and stated that his main point was asking the Council not to schedule a referendum at the November Presidential Election that involves the allocation of funds or the floating of bonds thereby allowing non-tax paying students to establish our tax rate.

Charles Galgowski, Baxter Road, spoke in favor of closing Ravine Road and to the benefits of grass based farming as practiced by Spring Brook Farm. (Statement attached)

David Palmer, Juniper Hill Road and member of the Bike Mansfield Advocacy Group, asked that any solution include a bike and pedestrian pathway along the road.

Rich and Lena La Blond, Stone Mill Road, oppose opening Ravine Road. The couple currently lives on a farm on a dirt road and described some of the challenges they encounter. (Statement in 1/25/2016 packet)

Ken Rawn, Planning and Zoning commissioner, Four Corners Water and Sewer Advisory Committee member and Codfish Falls resident but speaking as an individual, stated that he believes the road should remain closed with turn arounds on either end. Mr. Rawn stated that the Plan of Conservation and Development is supportive of agri business.

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Stacey Stearns, of Mountain Dairy Farms, urged the Council to close Ravine Road as it is not safe when mixed with farming. Ms. Stearns stated that inclusion of a bike trail invites trespassers who can cause damage to livestock and property. (Statement attached)

Dale Thompson, Middle Turnpike, thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and noted that as a young farmer himself he is in favor of Ravine Road being turned over to Karen Green. (Statement attached)

Bruce McCann, Stafford Road resident and Operations Director for Spring Brook Farm, reported how important Ravine Road is to the operation of the farm and asked that the land be given to Ms. Green.

Karen Green, Stafford Road and owner of Spring Brook Farm, presented a brief history of the farm and problems with the increased use of Ravine Road as a shortcut to UConn. Ms. Green urged the Council to consider discontinuing the road and returning it to Spring Brook Farm. (Statement in 1/25/2016 packet)

Olin and Quinn Green, whose family owns and currently operates Spring Brook Farm, spoke of their family's history on the farm beginning in the 1600's and urged the discontinuance of Ravine Road. (Statement attached)

Louise and Paul Lewis, purchased a lot on Ravine Road with the intention of building a house and had planned to use the road to get to UConn. (Statement attached)

Lynn Stoddard, Ravine Road, described the road as part of the neighborhood which is often used to bike, walk and as an access to the rest of the Town. Ms. Stoddard urged all stakeholders to engage in an open, honest dialogue to find a solution that respects all views. (Statement attached)

Keith Conrad, Ravine Road, asked a number of questions of the Council and stated that he uses Ravine Road to access his job at UConn (Statement attached. Statements submitted by Mr. Conrad from Tom Roby and Etan Markus will be included in the February 8, 2016 packet.)

Quentin Kessell, Chair of the Conservation Committee, member of the Open Space Preservation Committee and Codfish Falls resident, referenced the Conservation Commission January 20, 2016 minutes urging the Town not to discontinue Ravine Road. As a citizen, Mr. Kessell questioned why the Town allowed the road to deteriorate to its present state. (Statement and Committee motion attached)

John Silander, Silver Falls Lane resident and member of the Conservation Commission but speaking as a citizen, described the iconic natural beauty of the area and suggested the Council review the provisions of CGS§13a-141(b) which addresses permitted uses by a town on a discontinued road. (Statement attached)

Bernice Smith, Ravine Road, has lived on the road for 60 years and stated that the road has not been kept up. Ms. Smith does not believe it should be turned over to one person and enjoys walking on the road.

Garth Smith, Ravine Road, asked the Town to check to see if trunk lines supporting UConn run down Ravine Road. Mr. Smith is opposed to discontinuing the road.

Susan Mitchell, Woods Road, member of the Agriculture Committee and owner of Cloverleigh Farm, urged the Council to return the road to Ms. Green as the only abutters so that she may safely move cattle and machinery. (Statement attached)

Chis Kueffner, Ravine Road, commented that he does not think that the road is worth nothing and urged the Council to work to lessen the traffic on the road or explore an exchange that would include the long-term preservation of the farmland.

Peter Millman, Dog Lane, stated that as a cyclist he would miss not being able to ride on Ravine Road but noted that although it is difficult to balance competing interest it does not have to be an all or nothing decision.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, urged the Council to close the road; not to support the Northeast Corridor Future Draft Environmental Impact Statement; and objected the concept of a conveyance tax for open space preservation.

Edward Dorgan, Ravine Road, reviewed previous actions and discussion regarding the repairing and reopening of Ravine Road. (Statement attached)

Ted Panagopoulos of Manchester, Connecticut and owner of properties in Mansfield, questioned the legality of the rental parking ordinance and stated that no one has the right to invade another's privacy without a court order. Mr. Panagopoulos also asked for the reason the 4 tenant limit was changed to 3.

Charles Ausburger, Hunting Lodge Road resident and Planning and Zoning Commission member but speaking as an individual, stated that Ravine Road with its 10% grade is not conducive to biking and asked the Council to find an equitable solution which would include Ms. Green not having to travel around to North Eagleville Road.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, asked the Council to consider the interest of the Town as a whole not just the interest of impacted residents and suggested a study be done of all dirt roads in Mansfield. Ms. Wassmundt also expressed concerns regarding the Northeast Corridor Environmental Impact Statement noting that it seems to run through farmland in the northern edge of Town.

Drake Smith, Ravine Road, thought that the decision was made at the October 2015 Traffic Authority meeting and urged the Town not to give the land away.

Kip Kolesindkas, Manchester resident and conservation consultant, congratulated the Town on the updated Plan of Conservation and Development and the value it places on agriculture. Mr. Kolesindkas supports the need for safe access by farmers to their properties. (Statement attached)

Jim Galey, Coventry Road resident and Mansfield Fire Fighter speaking as an individual, commented that it is a waste of money to invest in Ravine Road and suggested the Town keep the road but give the farm access.

Cathy Gergler, Stafford Road, urged the Council to allow the Greens free and unobstructed access to Ravine Road. Ms. Gergler would like to see the road discontinued and no tax dollars spent. (Statement attached)

Lisa Adams, Stafford Road, requested that Ravine Road remain closed in an effort to deter trespassers, and that the Town not spend any additional funds on its upkeep. Ms. Adams noted UConn's historic commitment to agriculture. (Statement included in the January 25, 2016 packet)

John Clausen, Ravine Lane, commented that he appreciates the historical aspects of Mansfield and objects to the word 'unsafe' in describing the section of Ravine Road that is unfinished. Mr. Clausen noted that access on both ends of the road is an important safety issue.

Randy Corcoran, supports discontinuing the road and turning it back to the Greens. Mr. Corcoran commented that the Greens are making a living on the land and that other demands for use of the property could be considered greedy.

James Hanley, Storrs Heights Road, commented that the public right of way belongs to all and that a gift of the property to one person is not acceptable.

Barbara Hurd, North Eagleville Road, requested that the land be given back to Karen Green. Ms. Hurd stated that she walks the roads in the area all the time and that Ravine Road is too rough for biking.

Ed Hall, Mansfield Hollow Road resident and Agriculture Committee member but speaking as an individual, asked that the road be discontinued and returned to the abutters. As a farmer, Mr. Hall noted that he has had problems with trespassers.

Al Cyr, member of the Agriculture Committee and Bone Mill Road resident, commented that the Green farm is the second largest farm in Mansfield. Mr. Cyr stated that the Agriculture Committee is in favor of Ms. Green's proposal and reviewed the communication from the Agriculture Committee.

Phil Desiato, Coventry resident whose business is in Mansfield, spoke in support of the Greens and stated that \$100,000 is not enough to fix the road. Mr. Desiato asked that the road be given to the Greens.

Bill Roe, Echo Road, provided an update from the Mansfield Neighborhood Preservation Group. (Statement attached)

Alison Hilding, Southwood Road resident and member of the State's Council on Environmental Quality but speaking as an individual, noted that the Green farm is one of the last 100+ acre farms in Connecticut and that it is scenically, environmentally and agriculturally important. Ms. Hilding stated that many traffic problems would have been avoided if the Town had acted more quickly with regards to signage and decreasing the amount of traffic.

Vicky Wethrell, Summit Road resident, Open Space Preservation Committee member, and their representative to the Agriculture Committee but speaking as an individual, commented that the 3 interlocking pieces of agriculture, public access and the road must all be considered in any decision that is made.

Mike Jones, North Eagleville Road, urged the Council to discontinue the road and agreed with Mr. Desiato about the cost of repairing Ravine Road.

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded to recess the meeting until 9:35 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting reconvened at 9:40 p.m.

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to add the appointment of an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals to the agenda as Item 2.5.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

In addition to his written report the Town Manager offered the following comments:

- The Ordinance Regulating Residential Rental Parking was a Council Committee recommendation which has been duly approved and enacted. The ordinance pertains only to residential rental units. The Planning and Zoning Commission changed zoning regulations from 4 to 3 unrelated people living in a single family home in part to help reduce the incentive to create new rental units and to better regulate behavior. Ms. Moran commented that the initiatives were in response to neighborhood concerns about property values and poorly managed rental properties.

VI. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Shapiro noted that he, as well as other Council members, attended the Staff/Volunteer Freedom of Information Workshop conducted by Public Education Director Tom Hennick and that the event was well attended and offered great feedback.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

2. Proposed Ordinance Regarding Town Square

Mr. Hart addressed the questions raised during public comments regarding why the rights of the Council are restated in the ordinance. Mr. Hart stated that the reference is informative and the ordinance is setting up the mechanisms for additional policies and procedures outlining how the Square will be regulated. Mr. Hart reviewed the provisions of the Development Agreement regarding commerce on the Town Square.

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to suspend the Town Council Rules of Procedures for the purpose of voting on the Ordinance Regarding the Mansfield Town Square.

The motion passed with all in favor except Mr. Sargent who voted against the motion.

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Shaiken, effective January 25, 2016, to adopt the Proposed Ordinance Regarding the Mansfield Town Square, which Ordinance shall be effective 21 days after publication in a newspaper having circulation within the Town of Mansfield.

Ms. Raymond moved and Mr. Sargent seconded to remove the words, "Storrs Center" from the second paragraph of Section 138-3. A number of amendments to Ms. Raymond's amendment were offered and withdrawn. The motion to amend passed unanimously.

Mr. Sargent moved and Ms. Raymond seconded to strike the sentence regarding the use of tobacco product from Section 138-5. Mr. Sargent stated the language seems to be out of place and should be addressed elsewhere.

The motion failed with Raymond, Ryan, Sargent in favor and Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Shaiken and Shapiro in opposition.

The original motion, as amended, passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

2.5 Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded, effective January 25, 2016, to appoint David Litrico to serve as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for a term ending 11/20/2017.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Ravine Road (Unimproved Portion)

Director of Public Works John Carrington provided an overview of the issue and reviewed the options which have been explored. The Town Manager urged members to study the various options. Members discussed the issues raised during the public comment period, the process involved in discontinuing a road, the desire to structure an option which will accommodate all interests, and the next steps. Council members agreed to submit specific questions to the Town Manager by January 29, 2016 and to schedule a site visit.

4. Tax Appeal Pre-Trial Settlements

Town Attorney Kevin Deneen presented information on the settlements which are now subject to Town Council ratification.

Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Marcellino seconded, effective January 25, 2016, to accept the negotiated pre-trial settlements for the Eastbrook Mall and Woods Edge Apartments tax appeals.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Shapiro suspended the meeting to allow for the changing of the recording DVD.

The Council reconvened.

5. Northeast Corridor Future Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Linda Painter, Director of Planning and Development, explained that these very preliminary plans show the Mansfield section of the system as being underground.

Mr. Marcellino moved and Mr. Kochenburger seconded, to authorize the Mayor to co-sign a letter to the Federal Rail Administration with the Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission supporting Alternatives 2 and 3 of the NEC Future Draft EIS that include new passenger rail service through Mansfield and recommending that the following issues be addressed as part of a Tier 2 Draft EIS: changing the route alignment and station location to be consistent with the Town's smart growth development areas; minimizing impacts on natural resources and rural character; considering the potential of restoring service/connecting to service using the New England Central Railroad corridor; and conducting extensive community outreach on proposed actions and mitigation measures.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. Presidents' Day Ceremonial Presentation Planning Subcommittee

Ms. Moran, Mr. Sargent and Mr. Shaiken agreed to serve as the Planning Subcommittee for the Presidents' Day Ceremonial Presentation which will take place prior to the February 22, 2016 meeting.

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Mr. Kochenburger, Chair of the Committee on Committees, offered the following recommendations which were approved at the January 20, 2016 meeting:

The appointment of Jamie Lang-Rodan as an alternate on the Board of Ethics for a term ending June 30, 2018

The appointment of Pamela Roberts to the Mansfield Advocates for Children for a term ending June 30, 2019

The appointment of Jason Stearns as an alternate on the Agriculture Committee for a term ending October 12, 2018

The reappointment of Susan Harrington, Julianna Barrett and Tom Harrington to the Parks Advisory Committee for terms ending August 1, 2019 and William Thorne for a term ending August 1, 2017

The reappointment of Michael Soares to the Open Space Preservation Committee for a term ending December 31, 2017 and Roberta Coughlin (alternate) and Vicky Wetherell for terms ending December 31, 2018

The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mr. Kochenburger reported that the Committee is continuing to look for ways to recruit new volunteers and has talked to the Mayor about featuring a particular committee during the Council member comment section of the Council meetings.

Ms. Moran, Chair of the Personnel Committee, reported that at their last meeting they heard from a resident expressing concern with how volunteers have been treated and commented on the impressive amount of human resource work Assistant Town Manager Maria Capriola and her part time assistant Audrey Conrad manage to accomplish.

X. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

No comments offered.

XI. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

7. Letters Re: Ravine Road

8. C. Naumec (01/07/16)

9. N. Stevens (01/11/16)

XII. FUTURE AGENDAS

No items offered.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded to move into executive session to discuss Strategy and Negotiations with Respect to Pending Claims or Litigation, in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(B) to include Town Manager Matt Hart, Town Attorney Kevin Deneen and Director of Planning and Development Linda Painter (first item only), and Personnel in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(a), Town Manager Employment Agreement to include Town Manager Matt Hart and Town Attorney Kevin Deneen. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Strategy and Negotiations with Respect to Pending Claims or Litigation, in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(B)

Present: Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Raymond, Ryan, Sargent, Shaiken, Shapiro

Also Included: Town Manager Matt Hart, Town Attorney Kevin Deneen and Director of Planning and Development Linda Painter (first item only),

11. Personnel in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(a), Town Manager Employment Agreement

Present: Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Raymond, Ryan, Sargent, Shaiken, Shapiro

Also Included: Town Manager Matt Hart, Town Attorney Kevin Deneen

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 a.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

Paul M. Shapiro, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

Spring Brook Farm Sustainable Grassed Based Farming and Ravine Road Traffic

Submitted by Charles Galgowski, P.E., 117 Baxter Road, Storrs, CT, Jan 23, 2016

Hello. My name is Charlie Galgowski. My wife and I live on a small farm on Baxter Road in Storrs. For 33 years, I have done engineering work for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service designing and installing environmentally sound farming systems. I submit the following comments as an individual and not on behalf of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Town of Mansfield is fortunate to receive the benefits of grass based farming conducted by Spring Brook Farm. Grass based farming in New England typically puts livestock on grass pastures from May to mid-November. This allows the livestock to eat grass directly, rather than have feed brought to them in a barn. Grassed based farming has many positive environmental, nutritional, and economic benefits. Covering all these in five minutes is not possible, so I will touch on a few main points.

Some environmental benefits of grass based farming are:

- 1) A farm can reduce its carbon foot print. Diesel fuel is saved by having fewer crops to plant, harvest, and transport to the barn, and less manure to haul to fields. The livestock harvest their own feed and spread their own manure.
- 2) Perennial grasses can sequester high levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide into stable organic soil matter. Globally, optimally grazed pastures are being used to reduce levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- 3) The water quality of rainfall running off the ground surface or seeping into groundwater aquifers is often improved. This is because:
 - a. Perennial grasses once planted, require no plowing and harrowing. This reduces soil erosion and transport of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus into water bodies, including Cedar Swamp Brook, the Willimantic River, and Long Island Sound.
 - b. Perennial grasses have dense root systems that capture and store nutrients though out the year. This helps prevent them from leaching into sandy groundwater aquifers, including the Willimantic River aquifer.
- 4) Pastured livestock typically require fewer antibiotics. This in turn reduces the chances of evolving antibiotic resistant varieties of bacteria that can impact human health.

Some nutritional benefits of grassed based farming are:

- 1) Meat and milk from grass fed livestock has been found to have higher levels of conjugated linoleic acid than grain fed livestock.

- 2) The Mayo Clinic states, "Conjugated linoleic acid helps with weight management by helping reduce body fat and increase lean body mass. It's found in many meats and dairy products." Also, "When compared with other types of beef, grass-fed beef may have: less total fat, more heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, more conjugated linoleic acid, a type of fat that's thought to reduce heart disease and cancer risk, and more antioxidant vitamins, such as vitamin E.

Some economic benefits of grass based farming are:

1. Less expensive growing inputs.
2. More resistance to drought and wind losses.

Spring Brook Farm and Ravine Road Traffic

For economically successful grassed based farming, it is necessary to have the farm's fields joined together with farm or town roads. This enables animals to walk between fields as often as daily for beef and twice daily for dairy cows. Grass fed farming still requires some hay making and for manure produced in the winter to be hauled to fields. Fields close to the barn and connected by roads with little or no traffic enables efficient animal and equipment movement.

Presently, Spring Brook Farm provides the increasingly rare opportunity to have 500 contiguously located acres of farm fields and woods with a centrally located road. Perhaps 75 percent of the livestock farms in Connecticut cannot do grass fed farming, because their fields are not contiguously located and may be miles apart. But Spring Brook Farm can, because Ravine Road assists with efficient livestock and equipment movement. Having little or no traffic on Ravine Road is very important to helping this grass based farm succeed.

Stacey Stearns
Comments on Ravine Road
Monday, January 25, 2016

My name is Stacey Stearns and my family owns Mountain Dairy. I am on the agriculture committee, but am speaking for myself. As part of a large agricultural business in town, I am here to support closing the dirt section of Ravine Road.

I feel that the town should go back to the original plan of closing the dirt section of Ravine Road and allowing it to be re-absorbed by the Green Farm, the property owner on both sides of the road. As a resident of town, I don't feel the road is safe for regular traffic, especially when mixed with agricultural production.

In December, I walked the dirt section of Ravine Road, and found that the road is narrow, and not serviceable for two cars in areas, with steep drop offs. Traffic to UConn is a problem in this section of town, and I feel this represents a very large safety hazard to the agricultural production that is being completed by the Green family. Moving cattle and farm equipment on this road when it is open to traffic is precarious at best. We have seen firsthand the devastating effects of cars traveling too fast and hitting agricultural equipment on Mansfield Avenue. This issue continues to be a problem all over town. Just last week (Thursday, January 21st) we had a car speed past our feed truck in the wrong lane as it was traveling on Stearns Road at 7:30 in the morning from our heifer barn to our main barn to feed cows. Fortunately, that section of Stearns Road is wider and flatter than Ravine Road, however it still creates a dangerous situation and a hazard for those in agriculture.

On the second issue, of making the road a bike trail, I have to say that as an agricultural producer whose family also owns land in town, I am strongly against this idea. The road runs through Green property on either side, creating a bike path makes it an inviting place for people to trespass. Despite posted signs, gates, and fences; trespassing remains an issue for many landowners in town.

Again, I have a recent example of how this is impacting other agricultural producers in town. Last Tuesday (January 19, 2016), I arrived home from work at 4:30 PM and noticed a woman out walking in our hayfields. If you recall, it was incredibly windy last week, so I had to walk up through our fields to get this person's attention. She had driven her car on our farm road, through two gates that we had left open for our equipment to access the fields, and parked on the field to take photos. I informed her that she was on private property and asked her to leave. There is no turnaround, and she ended up driving on the hayfields to turn her car around, further damaging to the crop. This type of incident happens all of the time. Our family joke, which is only a half joke, is that I serve as farm security.

I can understand the desire of local residents to maintain access to the road for recreational purposes - the land through Ravine Road is beautiful. However, the land is privately owned and part of a working farm. The section of road does not connect to existing bike paths or public land, and is therefore not a wise use of town resources.

I firmly believe that not closing the dirt section of Ravine Road sets a bad precedent for agricultural and business support in town. Thank you for your time and attention.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Town Council for allowing me, and citizens like me, to address them in a frank and open nature. I am speaking on behalf of Karen Green in regards to the Ravine Road matter. My name is Dale Thompson. My last name may be familiar to you if you've ever been to Thompson's store. Tonight, however, I am not coming to you as an employee of the store, but as a young farmer. I understand how difficult farming is, and for Karen Green, even more difficult. Farming requires time, accessibility to land, and the drive to complete such projects as building fences, roofing buildings, herding animals, and dozens of other jobs. For my friend Karen, all these jobs are difficult given the amount of land in her possession. Her farm is exponentially larger than the land I work on and she possesses more animals than many other farms in the area. Take, for instance the fields Karen owns off of Ravine Road. The easiest and quickest way for the Greens to access that land is by Ravine Road, however, chronically reckless drivers force a large amount of money to be funneled into the road to maintain its' dirt surface. A few proposals have been put forward to place guardrails or improve the general consistency of the road itself, but these would only serve to allow drivers to go even faster. However, if any of these proposals were to meet the Town Council, would they spend the money? The answer is most likely no. There is no real way to justify keeping a dirt road, with only one property owner upon it, open. So what would happen? The dirt portion of the road would likely be closed again, and would fall into disrepair, with no reason for the Town to provide the upkeep for it and maintain its integrity to allow Karen to access her land. This practice is evident in the example of Old Colony Road. My suggestion would be to turn the dirt section of the road over to Karen and allow her to maintain it as she sees fit. If the Council truly is concerned with keeping agriculture in town, it would appeal to the convenience of one of the Town's largest farms, and those interests of a young farmer who has spent all his life farming here. In closing, if I may quote the Town's agricultural section on its' own website, "The Town of Mansfield is committed to preserving and encouraging local agricultural businesses." Wouldn't it be nice if we could stay true to that sentiment.

Dear Council Members,

January 20, 2016

My name is Olin Green and I am writing on behalf of myself and my brother, Quinn Green. We both attend E.O. Smith high school and are honor roll students. More important to the council is that we currently own and operate Spring Brook Farm and are the sixth generation of Greens to do so. Our great-great-great- grandfather settled in Mansfield in the late 1600s and the farm has been passed down generation to generation ever since. The original farm began as a much smaller operation, but over the centuries, we have expanded to own approximately 500 acres in Mansfield. In 2001, my father passed away, but we have carried on the legacy and continue to produce milking cattle, beef, pork, poultry and sheep products as well as to produce maple syrup and honey. Ravine Road is an integral part of our agricultural business, and we use this road extensively to maintain our land, harvest our crops and care for our animals. We strongly recommend to the council the discontinuance of Ravine Road, and the return of the road to the only abutters on the dirt portion of the road, which is our farm. Ravine Road is very important to our agricultural business and the discontinuance will allow us to operate our agricultural activities in a safe and uninhibited way. Please consider our request so that this farm can continue to be preserved and passed on to future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

Olin C. Green

Quinn W. Green

Ravine Road

LOUISE AND PAUL LEWIS

POUL ONLY UNDEVELOPED LOT ON RAVINE ROAD
RESIDE 18 HALL HILL ROAD, WILLINGTON, CT 06279

When we purchased a lot on Ravine Road it was with the intention of building a house. We work at UConn, and were excited about being able to walk or bicycle to work, only about 2 miles compared with the 5 miles that separate our current home in Willington from the UConn campus.

I know it is not good to take things for granted, but I think the last thing we would have thought possible is that the town road that has existed for more than a century and which links our property with Storrs center and the UConn campus would simply go away. If Ravine road is closed permanently, then all of our reasons for purchasing property on Ravine road disappear with it. As the Agriculture Committee letter correctly states, "Route 32 ... is unsafe for walking and biking" and thus our only option would be to drive around.

NOTE: OUR PROPERTY ADJACENT RAVINE ROAD (UNPAVED PORTION) TO

January 25, 2016

Dear Mansfield Town Council,

I live at 192 Ravine Road and submit these comments for your consideration on the future status of Ravine Road (unimproved portion).

Ravine Road (including the unimproved town road) is an integral part of the unique characteristics of this neighborhood.

My family has lived on Ravine Road since 1993. We bought this home because of the unique neighborhood that supports farming (our family farm as well as the Green farm) and provides bike/walk friendly access to open space ("Pink Ravine"), continuing on to the UConn campus, public schools, and town amenities. We raised our children in this neighborhood, walking the road at least once per day for the past 22 years. We have enjoyed family walks and bike rides and acted as litter stewards of the unimproved section of Ravine Road, picking up trash at all times of year, including on the annual Rid Litter Day. Over the years, we have all relied on Ravine Road as a safe bicycle commuting route. I use the road to bicycle commute to work at Eastern. My daughter used the road to bicycle commute to classes at UConn. Our tenant/professor uses the road to walk to work at UConn. My husband used the road to bicycle commute to classes at UConn. Our son used the road to bicycle commute to Mansfield Middle School and E O Smith High School (biking to school was faster than the bus and allowed him to sleep later!). We continue to use the road daily (for walking or biking), even after the gates went up. If the town gave this town road to a private property owner, our family and our neighborhood and many town residents would lose a treasured part of our neighborhood. If the road became private property, it would also cut off any means of safe access for us to walk or bicycle to any other part of town. Route 32 is dangerous enough for cars. It is unsafe for walking to work at UConn or bicycling to work, campus (UConn or Eastern), or errands in other parts of town.

All stakeholders should be included in the decision making process about the future status of Ravine Road.

I am very appreciative of the Ravine Road neighborhood meeting held by John Carrington on October 1, 2015. The meeting was run in a manner that encouraged respectful dialogue and the neighbors seemed to come to a consensus: to improve safety conditions and open as a two way road but install stop signs at narrow portions to create limited one-way traffic areas. However, I am concerned about the following issues around the ongoing process:

- Despite promises from DPW staff to keep neighbors updated monthly on the status of discussions and opportunities for public comment, we have had no

communication from town staff since the October 1 meeting. We received notice for this Town Council meeting on January 20, 5 days ago via email. The agenda and full packet of information were not available until 3 days ago.

- Apparently, Karen Green did not suffer from the same lack of communication from town staff. Her letter to the Town Council is dated January 16. Her supporters' letters are dated January 16, 18, and 20. Somehow these people were aware of Town Council consideration of this decision, with ample time to write and submit letters, all before Ravine Road property owners were notified that this issue would be considered by the Town Council.
- John Carrington's January 19, 2016 letter to the Town Manager regarding Ravine Road states: "Neighborhood perceives that the unimproved way is safer during snow. (Staff disagrees with this perception)." Many Ravine residents expressed the concern of safety when entering Route 32 from Ravine Road. Driving down the steep slope in icy conditions is terrifying and unsafe; the consequences of slipping are sliding into Route 32 traffic. Driving on the unimproved section of Ravine in snow or ice may appear unsafe, but the consequences of slipping are sliding into brush on the side of the road, not into ongoing traffic.
- The Traffic Authority has been discussing this issue for a while. Unfortunately, the Authority meets on a Tuesday morning when most people are working, making it very difficult for residents to participate. In addition, the minutes from these meetings are very confusing in that they seem to repeat what has happened in all prior meetings, making it difficult to understand who said what when and how many times.
- Karen Green says she would allow bike/pedestrian access to Ravine Road neighbors, if she is given the land. This is very neighborly. However, the Greens have posted signs, erected barriers to prevent bicycle/pedestrian access, and told me and others that the "road is closed." Even though it is still a town road, they have moved large logs and barriers to block access to pedestrians and bicyclists. I had to contact Mr. Carrington and the Town Manager multiple times while commuting by bicycle this summer because even when DPW opened the accessway, the logs and barriers would be moved afterwards to prevent access.

This decision calls upon the Town Council, town staff, the Ravine Road neighborhood, and town residents to engage in honest, open, and respectful civic dialogue to balance multiple priorities for our collective vision for Mansfield. We can work together to find a solution that respects multiple views and advances Mansfield's vision to support local farms, enhance transportation options and become a Bicycle Friendly Community, and acknowledge the unique characteristics of our neighborhoods.

There are many reasons why I love this town and why I offer many volunteer hours to advance our collective vision.

- I love the rural character of Mansfield.
- I love that we are a farm friendly community that values small family farms like ours (Bird Walk Farm at 192 Ravine Road) and larger farms like the Greens. My husband and I actively support Mansfield's farming community. Besides our own

farming efforts at Bird Walk Farm, my husband and I offer other property we own on Forest Road to young, start-up farmers so that they can begin farming before they are able to own land. Both KD Crop Farms and Sweet Acre Farm started on our Forest Road land.

- I love that Mansfield works to provide diverse, multimodal opportunities for how we move about our town, increasing sidewalks and bikeways, and acknowledging the environmental benefits as well as the health and lifestyle attributes of becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community.
- I love that our community values sustainability and is a leader in addressing climate change, resilience, and environmental sustainability.
- I love that Mansfield welcomes public discourse and understands the value of diverse opinions, as evidenced by the broad civic engagement in creating Storrs Center.

I know that these things I love are collective values shared by many in our town. These values are integrated into our planning efforts through the *Mansfield Tomorrow: Plan of Conservation and Development* so that we can make decisions based on the kind of town we want to be. The plan integrates the following sustainability principles and community values:

- The federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities (launched by HUD, DOT, EPA) has six Livability Principles, which served as the foundation of the Mansfield Tomorrow planning process (page iii of the Plan):
 - Provide more transportation choices* – “Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.”
 - Value communities and neighborhoods* – “Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods – rural, urban, or suburban.”
- The themes of Mansfield’s vision include: Strengthen Agriculture; Expand Transportation Options (Page 1.4 of the Plan)
- Goal 9.1: “Mansfield has a balanced, integrated transportation system that provides residents with viable options in getting from one place to another.”
- Strategy A/Action 6: “Consider the needs of users of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders, when planning, constructing, maintaining transportation improvements through adoption of a ‘Complete Streets’ policy.”
- Strategy B – “Develop an integrated network of sidewalks, bikeways and trails that connect residents with key community facilities and services.”
- Strategy B/Action 4 – “Pursue designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists.”

The town’s information on this issue focuses on the costs of improving and maintaining Ravine Road. \$100,000 is very little money if the town were to appropriate that to create a new bike/pedestrian path in another section of our town. In fact, Mansfield submitted an application to CT DOT in 2011 to build a 0.6 mile sidewalk

along Route 89 to provide safe bike/pedestrian access from Route 195 to Southeast School at an estimated cost of \$495,100. Why would the town give away an existing 0.6 mile bicycle/pedestrian access along Ravine Road that already exists, especially when creating such access is so costly? Furthermore, why would the town give away this public asset without receiving any compensation?

If giving up Ravine Road to a local farm is deemed necessary to support local farmers, the town should ensure that this farmland is guaranteed to be used for agricultural use in the future, whether by Karen Green, her family, or future owners of the land. This could be accomplished by requiring the donation of development rights for the farmland in exchange for farm ownership of the road.

Perhaps, in a way, this is one of the first "tests" for all of us in applying the many facets of our collective vision to a decision. Your consideration of the future status of Ravine Road must balance all of these values, listen to all of the perspectives, and be attuned to the setting of precedents that will impact decisions on other town roads/property in the future. I believe that these values – farming, bike/pedestrian access, preserving unique neighborhoods – are not in conflict. Ravine Road has balanced all of these values for many decades and there are multiple solutions for Ravine Road that would advance all of these values into the future. I am eager to work with everyone to come up with a decision that we can all be proud of and that supports our collective vision for Mansfield.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. I look forward being included in the next steps in the process.

Sincerely,



Lynn Stoddard
192 Ravine Road
Storrs, CT 06268
860-481-0544
lynn.stoddard@gmail.com



Mansfield Town Council
Four South Eagleville Road
Mansfield, CT 06268

January 25, 2016

Dear Mansfield Town Council,

I have been in Mansfield since 2003 and have lived on Ravine Road for the past 10 years. My job is at UConn, and before part of Ravine Road was closed I regularly used it to travel to and from the campus area: by car, by foot, or by bike, depending on the season and my schedule. Spring Brook Farm has as much of a right to use Ravine Road as the rest of us, not *more* of a right to use than the rest of us. The road was closed last year because of a one-vehicle accident injuring nobody. There have been accidents on other roads in Mansfield where people were even killed, and the town does not discuss letting nearby property owners take the road, which Karen Green is asking to do on part of Ravine Road. The road I live on has been used for decades by both pedestrians and vehicles not belonging to the Spring Brook Farm. This road is public property and should be maintained by the town for the public, not given away to the party that thinks it is the most important user.

The letters by Karen Green and her supporters – none of whom live on Ravine Road – ask the town to give her the unpaved part of the road for two reasons: (1) the closed part of the road is unsafe and (2) it will cost about \$100,000 to add safety features (e.g., stop signs and guiderails). I will respond to these points in turn before addressing some comments in Karen's letter.

(1) I used Ravine Road all the time to get to UConn before it was closed and I dispute claims that the road is dangerous if it is used properly, *like any road*. Besides, if the road is so unsafe then Spring Brook Farm should be using this time to develop a safer way to transport animals and equipment. Did the people writing in support of Karen Green visit Ravine Road on foot since it was closed to see how it looks before writing their letters? The surface of the road, before it recently snowed, looks exactly like it did before the accident (tire tracks from the accident have long since disappeared).

On the issue of safety, having two directions to exit Ravine Road in the event of an emergency is much safer than only one direction. If access to Route 32 were cut off by an emergency, how do the residents of Ravine Road get out quickly?

(2) While \$100,000 is a lot of money at the level of a family in this town, consider it on the right scale: the town budget. For each of the last two years the budget was over \$45,000,000. And \$100,000 is about .2% of the budget. That's not 2%, but .2%, i.e., 1/5 of 1%. If a family earns \$200,000, an expense of .2% of that is \$400. Will a family owning a house think \$400 is an outrageous cost to reshingle or repaint it? Figures need to be viewed in the right perspective.

Karen writes that the use of Ravine Road will only get worse once the UConn Tech Park opens up. If progress stood still that may be so, but during the time

that Ravine Road has been closed a brand new access road, Discovery Drive, opened up to connect Route 44 to North Eagleville Road by the campus. Last week a colleague at UConn who used to take Ravine Road to get to work told me that he'll be using Discovery Drive from now on.

Karen is asking the town to be given the unpaved part of Ravine Road without paying anything. Neither her letter nor any letter supporting her so far suggest that the road should be sold, only given up. I don't understand why the town is considering this option. What other public property in Mansfield would you give away for nothing (not even fair market value)?

Karen makes an offer to residents of Ravine Road: if she can take the unpaved part of Ravine Road for her own private use then she will let us walk and bike on it, but not anybody else – she considers a public foot trail or bike trail to be “detrimental to the farm's daily activity.” Since even a public trail – far less than car traffic – is no good; I am concerned that after securing private ownership of the unpaved section of Ravine Road she'd cut off access to that road to anyone who is not working on the farm; the tone of her letter suggests that is what she really desires, and the owner of land can restrict its access to anyone at any time.

Spring Brook Farm is currently inconvenienced by the closure of Ravine Road to vehicles. Before the farm seeks to grab the road for itself, it should consider how much everyone on Ravine Road would be inconvenienced by that.

I have a few questions for the town council:

- What vehicular accidents have taken place on Ravine Road in the last 10 years, and how many have involved farm vehicles?
- When Karen asked the town in 2011 to consider closing the road, why was her request turned down then?
- What have been the injuries to livestock at Spring Brook Farm caused by the public use of Ravine Road?
- Where are the competitive bids and engineer reports that back up the \$100,000 estimate to reopen Ravine Road, and if there are no such bids or reports then where did this estimate (more accurately, \$110,000) come from?

Sincerely,

Keith Conrad

P.S. The large stone blocks that have been placed by the town at the eastern end of Ravine Road are not very convenient for bikes. The space between the blocks and the gate should be widened more if the road is reopened.

I am Quentin Kessel of 97 Codfish Falls Road.

Currently I chair the Mansfield Conservation Commission and serve as their representative to the Open Space Preservation Committee.

Before the days of the Town Council, I attended a Town meeting moderated by Al Waugh in the old Town Hall. He was known for running a tight ship and seldom let members of the public go off track and waste the meeting's time. I mention this because I attended one meeting when the elder Myron Green rose to speak of his wife's failing health and he went on and on. I was very impressed with Al Waugh's patience at that time. He let Mr. Green finish and expressed the Town's condolences and the hope that matters would improve for the Greens. It was a very civil atmosphere.

My presentation will be in two parts, first as chair of the Conservation Commission:

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Mansfield Conservation Commission was a 1964 inventory of "places or areas where land use is of interest to the Conservation Commission." Item 1 on this list was "Cedar Swamp and the length of Cedar Swamp Brook." Item 2 was "'Pink Cemetery' Ravine. In 1965 the Commission unanimously approved a COMPREHENSIVE OPEN SPACE PLAN in which Item 1 read, "Cedar Swamp and the length of Cedar Swamp Brook. This would include Pink Cemetery Ravine as the brook runs southwest into Eagleville Lake." Later Mansfield development plans stated that Cedar Swamp Brook should be designated as open space and preserved by purchase or easement. Discontinuation of Ravine Road would be contrary to the long-term goals of the Town of Mansfield as ~~has been~~ documented over the years.

As chair of the Commission, let me say that we were not made aware of the current Ravine Road situation until last week. Our immediate reaction was, why on earth would the Town give up the scenic ROW through one of the most beautiful areas of Mansfield? We passed, unanimously, the following Motion: "The Town should not discontinue Ravine Road, because doing so would limit

access to a most scenic area of Mansfield." The Commission is concerned with Mrs. Green's plight, but the decision to discontinue a road is an irrevocable decision, affecting future generations of Mansfield Residents.

Moving onto my personal testimony:

The Town bears considerable responsibility for letting the road deteriorate to its present state. Mrs. Green addressed the Town of Mansfield Traffic Authority with her concerns in 2011, and it was known then that Mapquest (?) was directing UConn traffic along this dirt road. More traffic, even 18-wheelers proceeded to destroy the road. If the Town had listened to Mrs. Green five years ago and taken corrective action, we would not be here today. Now there are those in Town who want to correct the situation by giving approximately two acres of prime real estate away. This is dumb - it is time to "pay the piper." My first choice would be to take on the expensive deferred maintenance and make the road safe for traffic again. This would keep more options open for the future - we do have a responsibility to those who might sit here a 100 years from now. The next best thing would be to find a compromise solution satisfactory to Mrs. Green and the townspeople. The Green family has managed the farm very well over the years, in spite of this intrusive road; in fact the road has been of benefit to them.

I have heard no discussion of compromise solutions. Would it be possible to lease the road to Mrs. Green, as the Town does with land for other farmers? This would maintain the Town's interest in the land into the future. Is it possible to discontinue the road, but retain the right for Mansfield Citizens to use it as a walking path through this very scenic area? It is clear to me that the Town would be negligent in its responsibilities if it were to just give this land away, which a discontinuation would do.

FROM:

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 20 January 2016
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
(draft) MINUTES

6. Ravine Rd.

The unpaved portion of Ravine Rd, damaged in a trucking mishap, is now closed to traffic. It's been proposed that this closure be made permanent and that the Town's right of way on the unpaved portion be relinquished (in which case the unpaved section would be absorbed by the Green family farm). Neighbors on the paved portion recently met and decided to support maintaining the road, which affords them easy access to UConn. Kessel, Silander, & Lehmann were dismayed that giving up the right of way was under consideration, as the road is scenic and could be a fine recreational trail if closed to traffic. The Commission unanimously agreed (motion: Kessel, Silander) to add this item to the agenda. It then unanimously agreed (motion:

Kessel, Silander) to communicate to the Town Council the Commission's view that:

The Town should not discontinue Ravine Road, because doing so would limit access to a most scenic area of Mansfield.

John Silander from Connecticut State Statutes

Sec. 13a-141. Bridle paths; pedestrian walks; bicycle paths. (a) Upon written application made to the commissioner in such form as he prescribes, said commissioner may issue permits to private individuals, corporations or other organizations or to towns or other public authorities or agencies to construct and maintain, at the expense of the permittee or permittees, bridle paths, pedestrian walks, bicycle paths and suitable entrances to, and exits from, such walks and paths on the land owned by the state along any highway maintained by the state. Each such permit shall specify the location of the proposed walks and paths and entrances and exits which may be constructed and maintained thereunder. Each such permit may be revoked at any time, with or without cause, by the commissioner. All construction and maintenance work pursuant to each such permit shall be subject to the supervision and control of the commissioner or, if the permittee so desires and said commissioner consents thereto, the funds for such work may be deposited in advance with the commissioner and the construction and maintenance work may then be performed by the commissioner to the extent that funds so deposited will pay for the same, provided, if the work is performed by the commissioner, he shall furnish to the permittee, prior to the commencement of such work, an estimate of the cost thereof, with specifications of the work to be done. No fee shall be charged any resident of the state for the use of such walks and paths. If a town or other public authority or agency requests a permit to construct and maintain such path or walk the commissioner is authorized to contribute one-half of the cost of construction of such path or walk from funds available to the Department of Transportation, provided such town, public authority or agency agrees to assume the maintenance, responsibility, liability and supervision of such path or walk.

(b) When the selectmen of any town discontinue any highway or private way, or land dedicated as such, pursuant to section 13a-49, they may except from the operation of such discontinuance and reserve to the town and to the public such rights in such discontinued highway, private way or land dedicated as such, as may be reasonably necessary to construct and maintain a bridle path, pedestrian walk or bicycle path. Any such rights excepted and reserved to a town under this section shall be subject to the rights of property owners bounding a discontinued highway as are provided in section 13a-55.

used recently by Towns of Westbrook, Essex, Washington, Goshen

(1949 Rev., S. 2244; 1958 Rev., S. 13-130; 1963, P.A. 226, S. 141; 1969, P.A. 643, S. 1; 1972, P.A. 106, S. 1; P.A. 90-310, S. 1.)

History: 1963 act replaced previous provisions: See title history; 1969 act included pedestrian and bicycle walks and paths in addition to bridle paths; 1972 act added provision re construction and maintenance of walks or paths requested by town or other public authority or agency; P.A. 90-310 added new Subsec. (b) allowing

selectmen to discontinue any highway or private way for the construction and maintenance of a bridle path, pedestrian walk or bicycle path.

See Sec. 13a-153 re state liability for bridle paths, pedestrian walks and bicycle paths and injuries incurred on them.

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Sec. 13a-141a. State-wide footpath and bicycle trail plan. (a) The Commissioner of Transportation shall prepare and, when necessary, revise a state-wide plan for the establishment of footpaths and bicycle trails to be located adjacent to state and local roads except: (1) Where the establishment of such paths and trails would be contrary to public health and safety; (2) if the cost of establishing such paths and trails would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use; or (3) where sparsity of population, other available ways or other factors indicate an absence of any need for such paths and trails.

(b) Said commissioner shall cause to be constructed and maintained such footpaths and bicycle trails adjacent to state roads as are designated in the state-wide plan prepared under subsection (a) of this section.

(c) Any private individual, corporation or other organization or any town or other public authority or agency wishing to construct and maintain a footpath or bicycle trail along any highway maintained by the state shall comply with the provisions of section 13a-141.

(d) No footpath or bicycle trail to be located, in whole or in part, within the boundaries of any transit district shall be constructed without the prior approval of such transit district. Any footpath or bicycle trail proposed by a transit district, whether or not said footpath or bicycle trail is included in the state-wide plan, shall be given priority in planning and construction.

January 25, 2016

My name is Susan Mitchell and I am the owner of Cloverleigh Farm, a diversified vegetable farm here in Mansfield. I moved my home and farm business to Mansfield this past spring with the understanding that Mansfield was very supportive of agriculture. I made a conscious decision to relocate here as opposed to another community and would hope that what I heard is true: that Mansfield really is supportive of agriculture.

I am here tonight as a farmer, small business owner, and supporter of Karen Green. I am also on the Mansfield Agriculture Committee but my comments tonight do not represent those of the committee as a whole. In the issue regarding the use of Ravine Road, I believe that it should be returned to the only abutter, Karen Green, as a farm road so that the farmers can safely and adequately move their cattle and farm machinery in a manner that they see fit. As a community we need to support this business and this family, which has farmed this land for hundreds of years, who maintains 500 acres of working land, thus helping to provide a piece of the "rural character" that people love. There is a long history of the Green family farming in town and I hope that there is a long future to come.

Comments to the Town Council Regarding Ravine Road 1/25/2016

My name is Chris Kueffner and I am here to speak on item number 3 on your agenda, Ravine Road, where I live. More specifically, I am here because I don't think the road is worth nothing, as it is currently priced, and because I don't want to lose access to the road, and suddenly, it seems that is what is at stake. On Friday, and over the weekend, the story got a lot more complicated, when what once had been a straightforward chain of events began taking on the shape of a novel. I learned all kinds of things had been going on that I had no idea about, committee meetings, and letter writing. But am hoping for one more surprise.

First, let me say that this is difficult. It's difficult because I've known Karen for many years. And I knew Cyril Green, and Cyril's father. My hobbies and many agricultural efforts affirm my support of farming as does a nick-name Cyril gave me. Karen and Bruce have helped me with excellent advice and all manner of things: from slaughtering and butchering my animals to loaning pig crates, fixing mowers and my tractor.

I've helped them in small ways over the years, enjoyed their company many times, so, it's hard to come up here and suggest that something that Karen wants so badly, something that would make things easier for her, safer, still just doesn't feel right. Seems like it's too big a solution, too much of an "all or none" option. But there is one thing I know for sure: as a place in and of itself, the road is valuable to me. I also know it's not worth nothing to the town and it's not worth nothing to Karen.

I think we agree on the source problem, we just disagree on the solution to it. Karen characterized the ~~actual~~^{issue} very well in one word at a March 2011 Traffic Authority meeting when she evidently told them there was "unnecessary" traffic on the road.

But what about solutions? Saturday night my daughter asked me, "If you were the head of the town, what would be your solution." It was a great clarifying question. Because it wasn't what would I do, it was what would I do as a town leader.

I've never served on the town council and I've never been a town manager, but the question helped me realize that sometimes the hardest thing about being a part of a community is being a part of a community, working with other people. It reminded me, especially against what we've seen in Washington, that balance, and discussion and a level playing field of information, and finally, compromise, are the most important parts of a healthy democracy and community.

It made me think of the values of Mansfield in a larger way. I could understand how someone who had never used the road would be appalled at spending money to fix it, and I could understand how someone else would find the outright gifting of town property and assets an incredibly gross misuse of the public trust.

Then what? Now I need to make sure I'm solving the right problem and from the beginning that problem has been too much traffic. A gate, closed when Karen needs to

use the road, could solve that, but a more complete solution might involve working with the technology that created the problem. Since the Road has closed, turnaround traffic has diminished more and more until now there is nearly none. The signs never did work. It was that the GPS databases got the word out. GPS is why the traffic had grown so much over the last 15 years but also why it's now absent. Get the road downgraded on the databases, make use of the new gates, and we have the basis of a solution that honors our values, enables Karen and her family to continue farming safely and productively, and preserves the community's assets.

But there is one thing that might be better: and that would have to be a surprise announcement by Matt and Karen that the gift will be made in exchange for the long-term preservation of the farmland. If I was a leader of the town, I could see settling for either.

Members of the Mansfield Town Council, Submitted by C. Kueffner, 192 Ravine Road.

I have a few questions and comments I hope you will consider.

Is the road really worth nothing?

First, it would be interesting to get estimates from third parties to get a sense of how much the road is worth, and how much it would cost to build the same road from scratch, but it's about six-tenths of a mile long, built on a significant slope, and it certainly

Does the town give away other assets?

At the transfer station I can't even scavenge in the metal recycling for fence posts anymore. The town doesn't give away its used trucks or other assets to the person luckiest to be closest at them right moment. I don't understand why this is different.

Is the maintenance cost really \$100,000?

I don't think it needs to be, but even if it is headed in that direction, keep in mind that this would not be the case if the guidrails had been routinely maintained. It would have simply been a relatively normal ongoing maintenance cost. In that sense, this is deferred maintenance, money that was saved over the many prior years of deferral.

What is the underlying problem being "solved?"

The real problem and the cause of whatever traffic and wear Ravine Road endures seems to be that it has shown up or is ranked on GPS databases as being equal to paved roads. I may be ahead of the curve, but I imagine that Storrs is not the first place to have the problem and that there is a way to or a process of downgrading roads in the databases.

Will closing the road affect property values?

Because UConn is the price driver in the area, and this change will make UConn farther away, it seems clear that it could marginally decrease property values.

Are there less drastic options?

Of course there are. A one-way road is an obvious one. Reopening the road but retaining the existing gates and enabling Karen to use them as is appropriate for normal operations is another. Leaving as it is now is another. There are many.

Why was this repair put up against abandonment in this case?

It couldn't be normal for the town to consider repair vs abandonment every time a significant repair is needed—whatever the reason. Other roads needing culverts or drainage work surely have cost the town tens of thousands of dollars in maintenance.

Is the road really worth nothing?

For me it is much more than a road. To me, it is a place, and I go there often. I have walked it, biked it, driven it, and skied it thousands of times over the twenty-something years I have lived on Ravine Road. It is very valuable to me.

1/25/2016

Ravine Road gate

EDWARD DORGAN <edorgan@snet.net> To John C. Carrington
10/13/15 at 11:00 AM

Good morning John,

My wife was home this morning (from work) and reported to me that the gate is up at the spot that I informed you was not practical for turning around nor blocks access to the property owner just east of my property.

As you acknowledged in our last communication, it would be wiser to place a gate further east on Ravine Road. Please let me know that you will relocate the west gate on Ravine Road.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ed Dorgan

On Saturday, October 3, 2015 10:51 AM, EDWARD DORGAN <edorgan@snet.net> wrote:
Thanks for change of the signs.
Ed Dorgan

On Friday, October 2, 2015 7:04 PM, John C. Carrington <CarringtonJC@mansfieldct.org> wrote:
Ed,
Thanks for the email. I will do my best to get the road reopened as quickly as possible.
The sign was removed today and a no thru truck sign was also installed on the paved side.
Thanks again,

John

EDWARD DORGAN <edorgan@snet.net> wrote:

Good evening:

My name is Ed Dorgan and I reside with my family at 164 Ravine Road. I support option 4 concerning Ravine Road and hope that is the decision the travel advisory board decides upon at the October 27th meeting.

In addition, I am asking if the Town of Mansfield agrees to reopening the road [option4], that it be done as soon as possible; to allow those on Ravine Road the opportunity to use the road again.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Edward M. Dorgan
[860] 429-1344

p.s. - If the signage at the bottom of Ravine Road could be changed - remove the sign that says pass at your own risk - that would be helpful at this time.

To John C. Carrington

10/28/15 at 5:06 PM

Good afternoon:

Thanks for the information. It would be more convenient to find the funds and complete the work this fall. By next summer, it will be over a year that the road will have been closed.

The other question - did the town place the padlock and additional chain on the gate? If a town fire truck needed to get down the road, I guess they would need to remove the lock. As I previously shared with you- no cars have been past the cones left in front of my house. The cars still turn around in my driveway.

Ed Dorgan

On Wednesday, October 28, 2015 12:44 PM, John C. Carrington <CarringtonJC@mansfieldct.org> wrote:

Hi Ed,

We did not take a formal vote but the consensus is to take option 4 which opens the road with the two one way restricted areas to the council during the budget process to secure the funds necessary to make the improvements.

If the funds are approved, we would receive the funds on July 1, 2016.
We would begin the work to open the road soon after July 1, 2016.
Until that time the road will remain closed.

Thanks, John

From: EDWARD DORGAN [mailto:edorgan@snet.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2015 5:06 PM
To: John C. Carrington
Subject: Seeking update on Ravine Road

Good afternoon John:

Just seeking an update on Ravine Road - based on the Public Works meeting this morning.
Thank you.

Sincerely, Ed Dorgan

To John C. Carrington 12/30/15 at 5:03 PM
Thank you John.

Ed Dorgan

On Tuesday, December 29, 2015 9:35 AM, John C. Carrington <CarringtonJC@mansfieldct.org> wrote:

Hi Ed,

We are going to put the barricades back out, with the understanding that you volunteered to remove them during snow events.

I will get two "Road Closed Ahead" signs put on the same poles that currently have signs that say "no vehicles beyond this point".

Thanks,
John

From: EDWARD DORGAN [mailto:edorgan@snet.net]
Sent: Monday, December 28, 2015 5:29 PM
To: John C. Carrington
Subject: Seeking road ahead -closed sign

Good afternoon:

Around 45 minutes ago as I was working in my barn, 2 cars came up the hill of Ravine Road traveling fast. They went past my drive way without slowing-down. Luckily the second car didn't rear-end the first car. They slowly backed-up all the way to my driveway.

Could you please place a sign just east of my driveway that the road ahead is closed?

Sincerely,
Ed Dorgan

Town Council
Town of Mansfield
4 S. Eagleville Rd.
Storrs- Mansfield, CT 06268

January 25, 2016

Dear Council,

My name is Kip Kolesinskas. I am a resident of Manchester, CT but have worked in and around Mansfield for many years. I am a conservation consultant to Agencies and NGO's nationwide.

First I would like to congratulate the Town Council, Staff, and Commissions on the excellent work done on updating the Plan of Conservation and Development. I was especially pleased to see the recognition and value placed on agriculture and expectation that it will continue to be an important part of the economy, ecology, and community. Being a farm friendly community isn't just about updating rules and regulations though, it is about considering agriculture as a "highest and best use", not a temporary place holder, and creating a culture where as a business it can succeed.

The issues surrounding the future of Ravine Road are complex, and though, create an opportunity for the Town to support an agricultural business so it can grow and support the next generation. Traffic patterns that interfere with farm management and vehicles, create access for trespassers who knowing or unknowingly interfere with crops, livestock, and farm infrastructure are not consistent with a Town vision that truly supports agriculture. Recreational interests of a few (in a Town that already has many opportunities) and the convenience of commuters and others should not outweigh the needs for safe access by a farmer to their property to make a living, enjoy their land, and steward it properly. Keeping this area in farmland provides many valuable services to the human and natural community for free, and should be of primary importance to protect and serve.

Please consider this when deciding the fate of Ravine Rd.

Sincerely,



Kip Kolesinskas
44 Elberta Rd.
Manchester, CT 06042
860-878-0393
kip.kolesinskas@gmail.com

my name is Cathy Gergler
1233 Stafford Rd
Storrs, Ct.

The issue being discussed is very important to me. I have never been to a town council meeting so to be here clearly demonstrates how important this is and how passionate I feel.

My family goes back generations as residents of Mansfield Depot. Green's farm is a household name as long as I can remember.

The fate of Ravine Rd. impacts the town, but the impact on the Green family goes much deeper.

The negative impact to everyday life for them would be enormous. Without free unobstructed and unhindered access to Ravine Rd. —

The farm is the only abutment to the dirt section of the road. This farm is a legacy that reaches back generations. This alone should be taken into consideration. ^{Since} Mansfield stresses the importance of protection and conservation development.

This road provides access to many acres of land for the Greens Farm and their livestock. The feed discontinuance at the road is the right thing to do. However it is important that as a tax payer I would discourage the use of tax payer dollars to open a road. I would also not support any recreational use which would be detrimental to the agricultural business for the Greens. Thanking

To: Mansfield Town Council and Representative Gregory Haddad

From: Bill Roe, Mansfield Neighborhood Preservation Group

Re: MANSFIELD, CT NEIGHBORHOOD RENTALS AT CRITICAL JUNCTURE

Date: Jan 25, 2016

- Investors come from other CT towns and other states (ME, NC, etc.) to purchase single family homes in Mansfield to convert to student rental businesses because it is so profitable.
- Mansfield is **the HOST** community to UConn.
- There are student rentals in nearly every neighborhood in Mansfield, they are on the smallest roads throughout town – no longer limited to the areas closest to campus.
- There has been a 30% increase in the number of single family homes converted to rentals in one year 2013 – 2014.
- The character of the neighbors changes when the density of rentals increases; many neighborhoods are approaching the same density as Hunting Lodge Rd.
- One of the TOP GOALS in **Mansfield Tomorrow** is to reduce student rental density in Mansfield.
- If nothing is done, single family home conversions will **double** in the next 10 years and Mansfield will have to do what other college town have done – buy back rental housing.
- The Town Rental Department is approving all permits; not a single permit has been denied.
- There are now 400 rental homes in Mansfield; 36% of homes are non-owner-occupied. There is currently **no limitation** on rental density in Mansfield.
- Rental Permits are issued for one house, even though the landlord has other *non-complaint* properties.
- Rental Permits are issued by Housing Dept. even if the property in question is not in compliance with the Zoning Dept. ordinances. Compliance with ALL departments should be required before a permit is issued.

- UConn's website allows advertising for up to 16 tenants, even though Mansfield allows only 3 occupants (except in properties registered prior to 8/15/2010 which may have 4).
- There is no "Sunset Provision" to gradually eliminate all grandfathering when a home is sold or transferred.
- Neighborhoods with student rentals are less desirable to families than those without student rentals.
- The value of residential properties declines when student rentals move into a neighborhood.
- Converting a SFH to a rental business is not considered "change in use." Neighbors have no input into whether a neighboring house is converted to rental property (a business) whereas when you have an efficiency in your home, put up a shed, etc. neighbors provide input.
- Fines of \$150/month are disproportionately low compared to the rent collected, often \$3000/month, by non-complaint landlords.
- The burden of proof often falls on the neighbors to prove a rental is over-occupied.

Question: Are we going to be a "Rental Town" or "Family-Friendly Neighborhood" Town?

University of Connecticut Off-Campus Housing Service

<http://offcampushousing.uconn.edu>

141 Multon RD (contact/view online: <http://offcmp.us/5hokf6>)

141 Multon Rd Storrs, CT 06268 Contact: mori Phone: moribeheshi@gmail.com Best time to call: any Availability: Available Now	\$3,500 per unit 6 Bedrooms / 3 BA House Security Deposit: \$7,000 Location: Storrs Driving Distance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">0.40 miles from University of Connecticut	No laundry in unit, No parking. Convenient for: Graduate Students, Undergraduates
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this is a fully renovated spacious 6 bdrm 3 bathroom house located within walking distance to UCONN with huge front and backyard, garage and fire place.

11 Flaherty Road (contact/view online: <http://offcmp.us/7Y1cyb>)

11 Flaherty Road Mansfield, CT 06268 Contact: Aida Beh Phone: (917) 312-7807 Best time to call: Only email Availability: Jun 2, 2016	\$3,500 per unit 6 Bedrooms / 3 BA House Security Deposit: Two months Location: Storrs Driving Distance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">0.90 miles from University of Connecticut	No laundry in unit, No parking. Convenient for: Graduate Students, Undergraduates
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This is a beautiful house located one mile walking from campus on bus route. Lawn mowing is included.

9 Daleville road (contact/view online: <http://offcmp.us/tgm20j>)

9 Daleville road Storrs, CT 06268 Contact: Mori	\$4,200 per unit 7 Bedrooms / 2 BA House Security Deposit: 2 months rent	No laundry in unit, No parking. Convenient for: Graduate Students, Undergraduates
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Phone: (917) 312-7807 Location: Storrs
Best time to call: No call only Driving Distance:
email
Availability: Jun 2, 2016 • 1.60 miles from University of
Connecticut

This 7 bedroom 3 story house is located in a very quiet residential neighborhood . It is ideal for serious students who want to have a comfort of the home within a mile from UCONN. This house has 3 levels: first level is a complete 2 bedroom w/kitchen, living room, bathroom and its separate entrance. Second level has 3 bedrooms and 1 bathroom. 3rd level has 2 additional Bedrooms. It has hardwood floors and carpeting in most bedrooms, eat-in kitchen and breakfast room. The occupants are responsible for snow plowing and as well as all utilities. Owner will take....Read more at <http://offcmp.us/tgm20j>

52 Flaherty road (contact/view online: <http://offcmp.us/wzcutw>)

52 Flaherty road Storrs, CT	\$4,200 per unit	No laundry in unit, No parking.
06268	6 Bedrooms / 3 BA House	Convenient for: Graduate Students, Undergraduates
Contact: Mori	Security Deposit: \$8000.00	
Phone:	Location: Storrs	
morbehesht@gmail.com	Driving Distance:	
Best time to call: any	• 1.40 miles from University of	
Availability: Available Now	Connecticut	

This charming newly renovated 6 bdrm house is walking distance to UConn. It has 2 full kitchens, 3 bathrooms in 3 floors (full basement) in a quiet residential neighborhood. The house has living room, dining room, a garage and a nice balcony overlooking beautiful yard. It has front and backyard. The house uses oil for heating system. This is a great place for serious students to study.

January 25, 2016

To Mansfield Town Council

From Vicky Wetherell, 33 Summit Road

Concerning Ravine Road

I am a member of the Open Space Preservation Committee and a representative of that committee to the Agriculture Committee, but I am speaking on my own behalf. I see three interlocking pieces to this situation, like those wooden puzzles where you have to know how moving one piece will affect another piece.

Agriculture The adjacent 500-acre farm is the one of the largest in town size-wise and is the largest livestock business. In addition, Town residents enjoy scenic views of the farm's fields from Route 32 and Bone Mill Road. To produce pasture-raised animals, the farm is primarily grassland. I want to explain a bit about grassland. From an environmental viewpoint, this is one of the best agricultural land uses. The permanent grass cover controls erosion, sequesters carbon in the soil, and requires a minimum input (if any) of fertilizers or pesticides. The U.S. Department of Agriculture encourages grassland as one means to create and conserve productive, healthy soils. The Town is fortunate to have a large area of grassland and could encourage a variety of soil-health-related land uses elsewhere.

Public Access Ravine Road would not serve well as a public recreational connection to Route 32 because of unsafe sight lines on Route 32. People could walk/ride one way from Bone Mill Road, then return to the starting point. The road also could offer a connection for residents of the road to Bone Mill Road and to trails on the adjacent UConn forest tract.

The Road I live on an unpaved road, so I am familiar with the challenges of using this kind of road and the maintenance requirements. Ravine Road has the additional issue that GPS units in vehicles are guiding travelers to this road, just as a GPS unit advised my cousins to travel through the middle of New York City to reach my house. I am not convinced that the cost of improving and maintaining Ravine Road is worth it, especially since that investment would not reduce the volume or speed of traffic or resolve the impact of traffic and trespassing on farm operations.

I encourage everyone involved to take enough time to consider the interlocking issues and opportunities along Ravine Road and do some creative thinking about solutions. A resolution is in the interests of the whole town. Thank you for considering my comments and suggestions.